

Community Vitality Indicators



Data indicates that 54 of Indiana's 92 counties are in absolute population decline. This means that the outward migration exceeds the inward migration by margins significant enough that the net gain between annual births and deaths is insufficient to make up the difference. In some counties the deaths already exceed births. In addition, 24 counties are growing at a rate slower than the country as a whole and are classified as being in relative decline. At best the current growth rate casts them as neutral.

Healthy communities share certain characteristics and these characteristics provide CVIs that Indiana communities can benchmark to gauge their vibrancy. These characteristics should guide community discussions and plans should be developed to encourage them.

Assessed Value (AV)

- Assessed Value is the total dollar value assigned to all real property, improvements and personal property subject to taxation.
- Property tax caps and circuit breakers limit a community's ability to generate the resources required to pay for various amenities and operating costs that enhance the quality of place to enhance the ability to grow.
- AV grows as a result of new construction and in some cases, the acquisition of capital equipment. Market influences such as demand for residential, commercial, industrial, and even agricultural real estate will either increase or decrease the AV.
- Each community can review its growth AV through its County Assessor's web site; or through <http://ow.ly/YNk1t>

Per Capita Income

- Many economists believe that per capita income is the single best tool for measuring the economic health of a community. Per capita income is the average income received in the past 12 months computed for every man, woman, and child in a geographic area. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in that area.
- The per capita income is reported by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis in November of each year for the prior year.
- Per capita income information can be found at <http://ow.ly/YNkNs>

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Population Growth

- Population Growth is the change in the population, resulting from a surplus (or deficit) of births over deaths and the balance of migrants entering and leaving a geographic area.
- Population growth is an essential component of Community Vibrancy. A community with a population in decline is also a community that is aging. Aging populations impact school enrollment and a declining population indicates reduced demand for residential real estate.
- The largest investment made by most people is their home and they count upon home equity to help fund retirement. If the demand decreases individual wealth is lost.
- Population growth over time can be found at <http://ow.ly/YNksl>

Educational Attainment Rate

- This measures changes in the educational status of each community by age and by level of education completed. Communities with increasing rates of high school graduates, those with two or four year degrees, those with industry recognized certifications, and those with graduate degrees are seen as more appropriate for advanced manufacturing or other knowledge based employment opportunities.
- Higher levels of education are more likely to attract 21st Century jobs with higher levels of compensation.
- Educational attainment information can be found at <http://ow.ly/YNkDL>

Public School Enrollment

- Public School Enrollment is the total number of children (k-12) enrolled in public schools in a geographic area.
- School enrollment indicates not only the health of the community but the health of the schools as well. Education dollars are portable and go with the student.
- A good school will attract students from nearby communities if their schools are not performing quite as well. Growing enrollment also indicates increases in population of child bearing age.
- School enrollment can be tracked through your school's website or from <http://ow.ly/YNlaz>